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CHALLENGE

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FIGHT FOR COMMUNISM • LUCHE POR EL COMUNISMO • PLP

يا عمال العالم اتحدوا
Workers of the world, unite!
פועלי כל העולם התאחדו

SMASH THE SIEGE OF GAZA

Jewish, Palestinian workers must unite & fight fascist Israeli butchers!

We need communist revolution to put an end to racism and imperialist war!

GAZA—The workers of Palestine are under siege. In a barbaric act of fascist aggression, Israeli helicopter gunships and jets piloted by the Israeli "Defense" Forces (IDF), and supplied by the U.S., began pummeling Gaza the weekend after Christmas. As of this writing, nearly 1,000 Palestinians are reported killed and almost 4,000 wounded in what the Israeli government is calling "Operation Cast Lead"—which increasingly resembles the Nazi liquidation of the Warsaw Ghetto. UN observers report that the dead include nearly 300 children.

Mosques, schools, ambulances and homes are all targets for IDF missiles. Israeli ground troops and columns of tanks have now entered Gaza, and have cut electricty to the northern section. The Israeli military and government are turning away international aid to Gaza, including medical supplies, and refusing access to aid workers like the International Red Cross. There are no more hospital beds, basic medical supplies or even blood of any type. Not long ago, an Israeli warship actually rammed and destroyed a foreign aid boat. And Obama, unsurprisingly, has cast his lot where he always has: with imperialism and apartheid.

Modern Israel was born over 100 years ago, as Jews fleeing anti-Semitism in Europe began to immigrate there. This accelerated greatly after World War II when England and the U.S. refused to admit Jewish refugees from the holocaust. The Zionists' view of racism as a particular evil. used only against them, made them believe that only a Jewish state would guarantee safe harbor for Jews. This allowed the Zionists to invoke racism against the Arabs living in Palestine, claiming it was a "land without people for a people without land."

They bought up land and by the late 1940s had hatched a plan to forcibly remove Palestinians from as much territory as possible. Over 500 Arab villages and urban areas were destroyed and about 900,000 Palestinians were murdered or displaced (see "The Ethnic Cleansing of Palestine" by Ilan Pappe). Many modern towns, parks and forests are built on top of these destroyed areas. This history is unknown to nearly all Israelis. It is forbidden to teach about it in the schools.

Most Palestinians, whose population about equals the Jews, live on 22% of the land of Palestine as defined before 1948, divided between the West Bank, East Jerusalem and Gaza. A system of passes keeps them confined to one of these three areas, a tall separation wall surrounds them, and check-points dot the roads. Families are divided from one another, farmers are separated from their land, students from their schools, and patients from health care.

Israel controls 90% of the water, each Israeli using 15 times more water than a Palestinian. In Gaza, the Israelis have cut off most supplies, leaving the hundreds of dangerous tunnels dug from Egypt as the major supply routes for all goods. Hunger, malnutrition and unemployment affect the majority of Gazans.

The Israeli government continues to build more settlements in the West Bank, which is dividing the territory into three disconnected areas. This makes any proposed two-state solution impossible. Now more Palestinians and dissident Israelis are calling for one state.

As long as Israel continues to receive more foreign aid from the U.S. than any other country, about $3 billion a year, it is unlikely to change its policies. The U.S. needs Israel as a bastion of strength against the other countries of the Mid-East, who have the oil the U.S. covets or who oppose U.S. policies. Anyone who had hopes that Obama would change this should witness his groveling before the Israeli lobby and his appointment of Chief of Staff, Rahm, who had an Israeli terrorist father and is hard-line for Israel.

Palestine is also a class society, with a few wealthy families and the rest living very poorly. Its leadership is divided between the corrupt Fatah party, which represents the ruling elite and is all too willing to make deals with Israel, and Hamas, a fundamentalist Islamic nationalist party which controls Gaza. Most Palestinians have no use for either of them, but at the moment there is little alternative leadership.

The opposition "leftist" parties call for more democracy and one or two states, but do not discuss the structure of

the society, classes, racism or critique nationalism. There appears to be little organized opposition to occupation of any kind, except the few rockets from Gaza and regular anti-wall actions in two villages. Many predict a third spontaneous intifada, or rebellion, when some atrocity, like Israel's ongoing massacre in Gaza, sparks mass anger.

After a century of nationalism in Palestine and Israel, the Arab and Jewish working classes have received only misery. Nationalist leaders have pushed them into ethnonational conflicts and have continually exploited them for their labor. Attempts at working class and anti-racist unity have been continuously sabotaged by the local and imperialist ruling classes in the Middle East. A century of nationalism and opportunist alliances with imperialist powers have brought neither peace nor prosperity for Arab and Jewish workers. The capitalists are the ones who profit, while the workers suffer.

Nationalism holds no revolutionary potential for changing our world for the better. It is a tool of capitalism, used to divide and conquer workers from Palestine and Baghdad to New Orleans and Oaxaca. Only an internationalist and multiracial movement of workers, students, and soldiers organized around communist politics can put an end to the genocidal wars, colonial domination, vicious economic inequality, and racist and sexist brutalities that the capitalist ruling classes of every country create and maintain to stay in power.

Despite their fiery rhetoric, all national liberation movements have kept capitalist exploitation, racism, and inequality alive and well after achieving "independence." The bourgeois leaders of the nationalist movements always put their class interests ahead of the "people," while misleading workers to see the struggle for justice and freedom in racial or ethnic, rather than class, terms. As the history of Palestine shows, nationalism is always anti-working class and divides workers through ethnic, racial, and/or religious divisions to weaken their revolutionary potential.

Nationalist leaders are opportunist to the core, looking always for the best deal from one or another imperialist ruling class in order to safeguard their local power and profits. The recent dealings between Hugo Chavez's Bolivarian Revolution and Russia, China, and the E.U. is one contemporary example. Iran's growing relationship with Russia and China reveals another. Even groups like Hamas and Hezbollah, seen as possible liberators for Arab and Muslim workers, offer nothing but new nationalist (capitalist) leaders to take over the machinery of oppression, poverty, and misery rooted in the profit and wage-slave system. Revolutionary movements of the past were crippled by nationalism and collaboration with national bourgeois leaders.

It is fashionable today within what is called the political "Left" to discuss the merits of a two-state vs. one-state solution to the Israel-Palestine conflict. Is either "solution" an advance for the working class? What do the Palestinian and Israeli workers gain from national independence?

The Israeli workers have had it for well over fifty years. The result is that they have become such a highly exploited labor force that many choose to leave the country in search of better opportunities abroad. More than half of the world's Jews (the majority of whom are workers, not capitalists) choose not to exercise their national "right of return". This fact in itself says something about the hollow appeal of nationalism. For Palestinian workers to be told that they will see an end to exploitation and the violation of their rights if they have national independence under either bourgeois forces – Fatah or Hamas – is laughable. For a Leftist or a "progressive" (whatever that means) to claim that national independence is a worthy goal only shows intellectual shallowness and a lack of political courage.

It may be objected that there are no other viable alternatives to nationhood. Immediately, and next year, and the year after, this is certainly true. If, however, anti-capitalists refuse to raise the goal of a world without borders, if they refuse to attack nationalism as another form of racism, if they are unwilling to assert that workers must organize across boundaries, they will have even greater difficulties organizing against exploitation and war.

The material basis for this working class organizing exists: the tremendous and accelerating international labor migrations of the last twenty to twenty five years have forced workers to leave one nation for another. How deep can national allegiance be when it is changed like an overcoat? How deep can it be when workers see their national bourgeoisie locate factories abroad?

Many workers around the world today are bicultural and bilingual. With populations of immigrant workers scattered around the planet, there exists the basis for political organizing across borders. What is desperately needed now is a revival of communist politics across all borders – national, ethnic, racial, and religious – that relies on the politicizing and mobilizing of the international working class (rather than aid from the local bosses and/or outside imperialists). Workers everywhere must join together to take state power from the capitalist rulers, regardless of their race, nationality, or professed religion. The opportunity is there, why not seize it?

The international Progressive Labor Party is building just such a movement in countries all over the world to seize working-class power and put an end to the senseless carnage of imperialist wars and dogfights like that in occupied Palestine. Join us!

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